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Advocate of Peace.

VOL. LXVI.

BOSTON, MAY, 1904.

No. 5

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
PUBLISHERS,
31 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

MONTHLY, ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR. TEN CENTS PER COPY.

Entered at the Boston Post Office as Second Class Matter.

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The Menace of the Navy.

The fruits of the new naval policy of the United States are ripening so rapidly that notes of alarm are beginning to be heard in unexpected quarters. Certain papers and a few public men, who have heretofore either been dumb or open supporters of the policy which has led to the present heavy expenditures, are troubled that one hundred millions are to be consumed on the navy the coming year. They are more anxious still when they see looming before us the inevitable outlay of still vaster annual sums.

The predictions of those who have opposed the new policy of indefinite naval expansion as both un-American and entirely unnecessary on any rational theory of the nation's place and mission in the world, are coming to fulfillment with startling rapidity. The cost of the navy has increased in eighteen years no less than seven hundred per cent. In 1886 the naval budget was something less than fourteen million dollars. Now the annual outlay has risen to just under one hundred millions. During the same period the population of the country has increased less than fifty per cent., and the wealth of the country only one hundred per cent. The present cost of the navy per

year amounts to more than six dollars per family for the entire population of the country. In 1886 it was only about one dollar and a quarter per family.

The United States, though still the third naval power, when the ships now building are completed, is building more war vessels at the present time than any European country except Great Britain. We have passed, in this respect, Italy, and Germany, and Russia, and France, and are now entering vigorously on rivalry in construction with the greatest naval power in the world. Some years ago in forecasting the probable future of the new policy it was stated in these columns that the logical and inevitable result would be a final determination to outdo Great Britain in the matter of the navy in every respect. That purpose has been all the time in the subliminal consciousness of the naval partisans. Now at last, in spite of Senator Lodge's assurance, in his last speech on the subject, that we shall never want a navy as big as that of Great Britain, we are on the point of seeing this purpose openly and boldly put forward by the whole naval party as it is already by some of the more extravagant of them. The moment that we become the second power in naval strength, which is now the program, that moment all the naval trumpets, including Mr. Lodge's, will at once sound the call to go to the lead.

The limit of naval expenditures has therefore by no means been reached. The note of protest uttered by a few men in Congress and by certain newspapers is as yet too feeble and too infrequently sounded to have any serious effect. The promoters of the idea of a great American navy, both in Congress and elsewhere, whenever a word of warning is uttered, like that of Mr. Burton in the House of Representatives on the 22d of February, or that of Senator Hale when he submitted the naval appropriation bill, rush at once to the stage to defend, with every artifice of vehement platitude and deft pretense, the policy of naval expansion.

In an interview in March, Senator Frye, president of the Senate, frankly asserted that we must be prepared to lay out two hundred millions a year on the navy. That is at least fifteen millions a year more than the great navy of England now costs. We have now eleven first-class battleships, and eleven more have been authorized. The naval board proposes to have the number increased to forty-eight. When this is done, and the corresponding ships of other

types added,—and from the present trend of things there is no doubt that all this will be done,—it will then require at least two hundred millions a year to maintain such a navy, without the addition of further ships. At the present rate of increase, which is geometrical rather than arithmetical, we shall have more than reached in fifteen years the expenditure of this immense sum annually. The chances are more than even that we shall have reached it in less than ten years, for the increase the past year alone has been fifteen millions.

Senator Lodge's attempt to support the policy of indefinite naval expansion by pointing out that the percentage of increase in naval expenditures has not been greater than that in the government expenditures generally, will not bear criticism. This contention assumes that the great increase in other directions, especially in the army expenditures in recent years, to which he alludes, has all been wise and commendable. Much of the recent increased army cost, to say nothing of the abnormal outlays on pensions since the Civil War, has sprung from the same un-American policy that has led to the recent enormous naval increase, and is to be condemned for the same reason. But if the claim were otherwise well founded, Mr. Lodge's argument would be worthless. Instead of keeping pace in growth with the civil expenses of the government, the cost of the navy and of all other instruments of war ought steadily to decline. Civilization relies less and less on brute force, and its growth has always been marked by the decreasing resort thereto. To insist that outlay on the navy shall keep pace in growth with the increase of the civil expenditures of a great civilized country like ours is to show a curious confusion of ideas as to what civilization is. It is to demand that the nation shall deliberately try to keep up a lower and cruder civilization while it is advancing to a higher and finer one.

What assurance is there that we shall stop at the enormous outlay of two hundred millions a year on the navy, which is now proposed as the topmost figure? None whatever, unless there shall be a sudden and radical change in the attitude of the people. The aggressive foreign policy which has brought us to spend a hundred millions a year—a policy foisted in upon us by a group of astute imperialistic politicians, aided by a number of mercenary newspapers and a tireless professional naval coterie, and accepted off hand by a well-meaning populace whose patriotism and humaneness have been "worked" into a fever of fear of enemies and a passion of assimilative "benevolence" towards less fortunate peoples—this policy is now in full force. It has the unbounded support of the White House, where the navy is the chief pet, and seems likely to have this strenuous backing for five years to come. It is in "full possession" of the government, and is

bold in the consciousness of its strength. Not an opportunity anywhere is allowed to pass without the pushing of the naval boom.

From all these considerations there is scarcely a doubt that we shall yet be brought to spend at least three hundred millions a year on the navy before the people awake to see the danger and the folly of the situation. Our increased naval activity will not induce Great Britain to halt in hers. On the contrary, she will be provoked thereby to still greater exertions to maintain her supremacy on the sea. It is at the present moment freely talked in England that while the British navy is for defense, ours is for aggression. Britain thus attempts to cover up her own transgressions by publishing ours on the house-top. But is she likely to lie by and unconcernedly allow us to outstrip her in the means of maintaining an aggressive imperial policy, in the prosecution of which she has so long been a past master? And then further increase on her part will mean more and bigger and costlier ships for us. This is the perilous descent on which we are being artfully led further and further, and the country is plunging on down after the leaders, totally heedless of the tremendous injury which is to befall the nation in one way or another at the end.

It is pathetic to notice that the bigger the navy becomes the greater the certainty of its promoters that we are in immediate danger of attack from other powers. This fear of attack is the incessant excuse put forward by them for naval increase. But every new war ship, instead of lessening their fear, seems to add to it. Then they demand new ships to allay their fear. Twenty years ago, when we had no navy to speak of, we heard nothing of this impending descent of enemies upon us. Now it is the stock talk. Secretary Moody declares that if we do not make our navy greater so as to defend our twenty-six thousand miles of seacoast, our shores will become "a pathway to our enemies." What enemies he does not tell us. Senator Lodge declares that "the navy represents the peace of the United States"; that "the decline of the navy would mean war." He does not tell us what represented the peace of the country when we had no navy.

These assertions, which are made *ad nauseam*, are hard to deal with, because no reasons are given for them. There are no reasons. They are pure figments of the imagination. We have no national enemies. No nation ever declared war against us; no nation has now the remotest idea of doing so. There is no more danger that we shall be fallen upon from over sea by Germany than by the Duchy of Luxemburg or the new republic of Panama—if, that is, we behave ourselves and do not provoke her to madness by base insinuations. No nations have any hostile feelings towards us, except such as we may have provoked in them by our recent imperial-

istic and aggressive performances. And such hostile feelings as these, if any exist, furnish the strongest possible incentive, to wise and far-seeing patriots and statesmen, not to enlarge the provocation, but to remove it by abandoning both the increase of the navy and the policy which has fostered it. That is the only logical and sensible thing to do, and the people will see it some day when they have paid long and heavily for their folly and indifference.

No; the great increase of the navy means something entirely different from what is put forward as an excuse for it by these public men. The heavy expense is the least of the mischiefs of it. It means aggression and friction, injustice toward weaker peoples and greater risks of embroilment and war with the strong. It means the degradation of our long-cherished national ideals and going the old, common, brutal ways of national aggression and violence. Senator Lodge gave away the whole secret of the matter when he said that "no position could be worse than that of a nation which, like ours, is *rich and aggressive*, if it is left unarmed and undefended." *Aggressive*, because we are rich and powerful—it is in that, let the people remember, that the menace of our great naval increase lies; and it is in that, also, that lies its positive and inexcusable wickedness. Has our great country no longer any mission to the world higher and more noble than to be *rich and aggressive*?

The Moral Tragedy of War.

Every war discloses almost immediately a moral phenomenon which to a man of healthy conscience would seem utterly incredible, if it were not so common. No sooner are two peoples fighting than practically all moral principles are abandoned by each of them as criteria of judgment of their conduct and feelings toward each other. Certain precedents or commonly recognized "rules of the game" are observed with considerable care, but all the great principles of conduct which bind men in their ordinary relations are at once thrown to the winds, and deeds are done and feelings exhibited befitting only beings to which conscience is unknown. Killing, lying, deception, misrepresentation, rejoicing over the disasters of the enemy, destruction of the other's property, all come at once to the fore as if they were elemental virtues. The present war in the East has already produced this phenomenon in a striking way.

The physical tragedies of warfare are horrible enough. To people of any imagination, whose minds have not been perverted by false notions of war, it has been impossible to read of the blowing up and sinking of the Russian warships at Port Arthur, with nearly all on board, without feeling "a horror of great darkness" fall upon the soul. Men hurled high into the air, others mangled and weltering in

blood on the deck, others scalded to death by steam from the exploding boilers, others imprisoned below the decks and turned into raving madmen, nearly the whole body of six hundred in the case of the Petropavlovsk, with mingled cries and groans, swallowed down by the furious maelstrom produced by the wrecked vessel—that is tragedy enough, certainly, to satisfy the grimmest demon of a sensation seeker. The terrific work of a shell exploding in the midst of a body of men, as described in a letter of a wounded Russian officer which we publish in part on another page, cannot be read of, in its ghastly details, without making one grow sick and faint of nerve, or could not be, if it had happened outside of war.

But the moral tragedy behind these occurrences is incomparably worse than the physical. Not an officer of the army or navy nor a common soldier from the ranks could have been brought in private life to do anything resembling the hurling of a shell into the midst of a body of men or the torpedoing of a ship with hundreds of men on board. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" they would have replied to the mere suggestion of stooping to such infinite meanness. Deeds like these, even in a small way, are reserved in common life for the lowest of the low, and even when done in the passion of a quarrel they are judged by the common code of society as murder.

But now that war has broken out, every Jap and every Russian is eager to be first in conceiving and executing any device for the killing of men in detail or wholesale, and the individuals who succeed most fully are the ones on whom the governments hang the most medals. The awful tragedy of the Petropavlovsk is reported to have given "great satisfaction" among the Japanese everywhere. A Japanese scouting party is annihilated by Russian bullets and bayonets, and that occasions a delirium of "rejoicing" at St. Petersburg.

What has happened to the souls of the two peoples that they are thus for the time being standing over against each other rejoicing each in death and disaster on the other side, and each exalting to the skies in its own men deeds the like of which in the enemy are considered the basest possible? Here is the real tragedy of war,—the dethronement of conscience, the deadening of the moral sentiments in the men and the nation, and the sinking of them into the slimy depths of animalism,—hatred, malevolence, fiendish cunning, and wild delight in the evils befalling their adversaries. Six hundred men only went down to death in the depths with the great ship off Port Arthur, and smaller numbers in other vessels, but the millions of both peoples have been swept away by the surges of the war into the abyss of this moral degradation.

Beyond the confines also of the nations directly